



South Mountain Corridor Study

Citizens Advisory Team
Meeting Summary

Date: March 22, 2007
Time: 5:30 p.m.
Location: ADOT Board Room

CAT Members Attending:

Laurel Arndt, Ahwatukee Village Planning Committee
Sandy Bahr, Sierra Club
Clayton Danzeisen, Maricopa County Farm Bureau
Peggy Eastburn, Estrella Village Planning Committee
Michael Goodman, Phoenix Mountains Preservation Council
Dan Jones, Southwest Valley Chamber of Commerce
Linda Lujan, South Mountain/Laveen Chamber of Commerce
Jim McDonald, City of Avondale
Michael Norton, Laveen Village Planning Committee
Dave Olney, Valley Forward
Nathaniel Percharo, Pecos Road/I-10 Landowners Association
Laura Prendergast, Laveen Citizens for Responsible Development
John Rodriguez, Lakewood HOA
Carola Tamarkin, Ahwatukee Foothills Chamber of Commerce
Dave Williams, AMTA

Staff and Consultants

Tom Keller, KCA	Bill Vachon, FHWA
Fred Erickson, KCA	Amy Edwards, HDR
Timothy Tait, ADOT	Heather Honsberger, HDR
Dan Lance, ADOT	Dean Howard, PDG
Matt Burdick, ADOT	Emily Bittner, PDG
Michael Bruder, ADOT	Joy Butler, PDG
Sally Stewart, ADOT	
Doug Nintzel, ADOT	

Citizens:

Greta Rogers
Doug Murphy (Ahwatukee Foothills News)

Action Items

Task/Activity	Who	When
Provide previous Draft CAT Operating Policies to CAT members electronically for review and comment	KCA	Done 3/22/07
Provide April CAT meeting agenda	KCA	
Provide ADOT's operating procedures in relation to the CAT.	Team	

Welcome and Introductions:

Tom Keller, Knowledge Capital Alliance, welcomed the Citizens Advisory Team (CAT) members and citizens to the meeting. The CAT members introduced themselves, since one-third of the group were new. ADOT and FHWA personnel also introduced themselves. Tom discussed the logistics of the meeting and how the group would like to receive materials in the future.

South Mountain CAT Historical Perspective

Matt Burdick, Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT), provided an overview on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) review process and a history of the CAT. He explained that the Administrative Draft EIS is currently under review by ADOT and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). The Draft EIS would be ready for public review in 2008. Matt explained that ADOT wanted to talk to the CAT about the timing of their future meetings in relation to the review process. ADOT would like the CAT meetings to be held at appropriate times so the meetings could be as fruitful as possible. Matt explained that the topics to be discussed at each CAT meeting would be determined at a later stage.

CAT Member Comment: Why wait to discuss air quality?

Response: The Administrative Draft EIS is currently under a technical review to ensure the information contained in the document is correct. ADOT is trying to get the information out to the CAT as soon as possible, but needs to obtain federal review and approval by FHWA. We are currently working through this process.

Matt also explained the community outreach process that will be held prior to the public hearings. The study team is available and would like to meet with each of the CAT members' organizations to explain the EIS review and comment process. Matt encouraged the CAT members to participate in these group meetings and to help bring their organizations' comments to ADOT.

Future CAT meetings will be focused on specific topics (following the second orientation meeting). The initial thought is to hold approximately five meetings to address specific CAT-recommended topics.

Matt also provided an overview of the study and explained that the project is the most complex since the Deck Park Tunnel.

CAT Member Comment: Bullet should be added to slide that ADOT picked the W55 Alternative, and ignored the CAT recommendation of the W101 Alternative.

CAT Member Comment: Differences in opinion are going to happen, this group is advisory.

Response: ADOT's decision was based on a number of factors, including economic impacts and acceptability from a community perspective.

CAT Member Comment: Understand that without federal funding, the South Mountain Freeway can not be built and that termini are required?

Response: Yes, federal process requires what is called “logical termini”, such as a freeway to freeway connection. We are working toward making that connection.

CAT Member Comment: Where does the Gila River Indian Community (GRIC) stand? Have they given permission to study on the GRIC? Articles in the newspaper make it sound like they have changed their position.

Response: ADOT has received a resolution from the GRIC opposing the study on community land. The recent newspaper articles do not apply to the South Mountain Freeway Study. The GRIC is working with ADOT on other projects, such as Interstate 10 (I-10). If the Gila River Community changes its position, ADOT will consider any options they present up to the record of decision.

CAT Member Comment: The GRIC team assembled for I-10 and the surrounding area was told by Council that later this year they may bring additional people to discuss the northern area. We might hear something new later this year.

CAT Membership Discussion

Tom Keller provided an explanation of the facilitator’s role as a neutral third party, with no voting rights. Tom further discussed the composition of the CAT and whether there was a clear understanding of the CAT’s role and how they should operate. The CAT also discussed whether the group fully represents the issues. Suggestions for additional groups included the following:

- Medical representatives
- Arizona Public Health Association
- Maricopa County Asthma Association
- Additional Homeowners Associations (HOA) in Laveen
- Additional GRIC representation

The CAT discussed whether the medical representatives and organizations should be invited as members of the CAT or as presenters. ADOT explained that all previous members on the CAT were contacted to continue their participation. Groups not in attendance on March 22, 2007 did not express a desire to continue on the CAT.

CAT Member Comment: Medical representatives should be allowed to give their input, but not as a presenter.

CAT Member Comment: Having doctors as presenters would be helpful, but they don’t need to be members.

CAT Member Comment: Doctors would make good members because current CAT members could mingle with them at meetings.

CAT Member Comment: The process needs to move forward. Commenter questioned the intent of adding these members – to delay the process or provide information.

CAT Member Comment: We need medical opinions to make a recommendation because ADOT didn’t follow our recommendation last time.

CAT Member Comment: The medical voices represent the community; we need to inform the community.

CAT Member Comment: CAT members were selected because they represent larger groups. As such, I believe it is my job to keep my community informed of what's going on and bring their concerns to this group. Doctors don't represent a larger constituency; their role is to provide information. A doctor could provide information, but they can not change federal regulations.

CAT Member Comment: Doctors have a good voice and would be a strong and logical addition to the CAT.

CAT Member Comment: The Villages have changed over the past five years. There are at least three HOA's in Laveen that might be interested in joining the CAT.

CAT Member Comment: Important to remember that the CAT provides recommendations not decisions.

Tom Keller asked the original CAT members how the group was formed. Original members explained that the study team interviewed each member and asked if there was any one else they should talk to. Matt Burdick explained that in the past the CAT would obtain consensus on adding a new member, and ADOT would extend an invitation. Matt said that the CAT has determined its own composition. Tom also discussed what consensus means for the CAT, and explained that this is typically obtained by a majority opinion. He added that if the CAT membership needs to expand, a process for this expansion needs to be defined.

Review of Existing SMCAT Charter Document and Review Opportunities to Enhance the Document

Tom introduced the original "DRAFT DRAFT" Operating Procedures to the CAT and recommended that the group review this document during the March 22, 2007 meeting and the April 2007 meeting.

CAT Member Comment: Frustrated over the purpose and role of the group. Formality of the CAT created a false sense of importance.

Tom asked whether the group had a charter that established the CAT's charge. Did the group define their membership or expertise? CAT members responded that they did not have a charter.

CAT Member Comment: Need to include additional membership representing major industry and business employers.

CAT Member Comment: Role as a CAT member is to communicate with your community, serve as a liaison to the local businesses, and disseminate information.

CAT Member Comment: Presentations to organizations would be helpful.

CAT Member Comment: Does ADOT have a list of people who think they should have a seat at this table?

Matt Burdick said a group in Tolleson contacted ADOT to participate and a CAT member recommended that doctors participate. Matt said that it is up to the CAT to decide who to invite in the group.

CAT Member Comment: We've done more than four years of research and studying. There were some people who wanted to jump into this process when the story hit the press. Those people would need to be brought up to speed.

The group discussed the possibility of writing a charter to help in their future efforts. The CAT also reviewed the previous Draft Operating Policies and provided the following input:

- Request a project team roster defining roles and responsibilities
- Don't have meetings unless there is a document to review
- ADOT tried to compress the review process
- Packets need to be sent out more than five to seven days in advance of a meeting
- Need adequate time to review materials
- Hold meetings every six to eight weeks
- Need meaningful meetings
- Frustration over topics and issues previously discussed, need information in totality
- Need to give each topic enough time for discussion
- Need to have a realistic schedule between now and next year, what can be discussed – air quality, traffic, purpose and need?
- Study Area is too small
- Review topics to discuss in April
- Provide a review from a historical point of view for new members, including the criteria to guide the W101 recommendation
- Concern regarding MAG's traffic numbers in the Eastern Section
- Provide California study on air quality
- Need to be able to discuss all issues in a natural dialogue; limiting topics to only specific meetings will impede this natural dialogue.

Tom Keller asked the CAT whether their approach should be the Discuss, Debate, Commit method. Tim Tait, ADOT, explained that ADOT is prepared to discuss certain topics fully and then come to a decision.

CAT Member Comment: Is ADOT concerned about skipping meetings? ADOT needs to be committed to using the CAT's time wisely. The members need materials in advance, and ADOT needs to respond to schedule changes. There might need to be large gaps between meetings to fully explain topics. CAT members must have all information.

Response: Tom Keller explained that it is the facilitator's role to make sure the meetings have purpose, otherwise there will be no meeting.

CAT Member Comment: It would be nice to have the summer off to add new members and prepare multiple presentation topics.

Response: Topics presented will depend on the FHWA review schedule.

CAT Member Comment: Concern that previous meeting summaries were superficial. Responses to the public's questions were too general. There should be a transcriber for each meeting and a tape recorder. Tones and concerns of the CAT were not reflected in the summaries. A transcript would show that comments from CAT members have real significance.

Tom Keller asked the CAT members whether the CAT would approve the minutes. The CAT members responded that minutes were not approved since they are not a decision-making body. Tom also asked what the CAT wants out of the future process. Responses included needing direction from ADOT, role of a decision-making body versus a recommending body, concern after the Western Section recommendation, and whether the investment is worth the time if ADOT is going to make their own independent decision.

In addition, Tom discussed the frustration the CAT members were feeling about the Western Section recommendation and the disconnect between the role of the CAT and the outcome of their decision.

CAT Member Comment: The Western Section decision was extremely frustrating for the CAT members. We were given reasons for ADOT decision, but no one saw the MAG traffic study that ADOT used to make their decision. Where is the MAG traffic study? CAT was told make a decision in April 2006 and then the new MAG study came out in June 2006.

CAT Member Comment: Would like more feedback on why the W101 recommendation was not followed.

CAT Member Comment: Don't want to go through the same thing again.

CAT Member Comment: Frustration over the time spent and hurt feelings because ADOT did not take the CAT's recommendation

CAT Member Comment: ADOT doesn't need to take the CAT's recommendation

CAT Member Comment: Would be helpful for the new members to understand what went into ADOT's Western Section recommendation of the 55th Avenue Alternative. New members need to understand the traffic numbers and concerns over the tank farm shift.

Tom summarized the CAT's frustrations and mistrust of ADOT. He asked whether the group had the will to move forward and whether there is a desire to move forward to April. He discussed whether the team and the process are fixable.

CAT Member Comment: Goal to provide end recommendation, but hung too much to the end product

CAT Member Comment: Process is bad, hours spent wasted, feelings of disrespect for ADOT. We need a commitment that this will not happen again.

CAT Member Comment: Need to remember that the CAT did a lot of good things as well, helped identify on-and off-ramps and historic sties.

CAT Member Comment: ADOT could do a responsiveness summary to explain the W55 decision. Usually new information reopens a process.

CAT Member Comment: Felt Victor Mendez's briefing to the CAT went very well and he explained the reasons for ADOT's recommendation clearly.

CAT Member Comment: Actions speak louder than words, feel that ADOT's handling of their recommendation was disrespectful. However, there's no need to re-build trust or require therapy.

CAT Member Comment: Uncomfortable demonizing ADOT. Can we move forward with new operating procedures? Would like to contribute on behalf of their organization.

CAT Member Comment: Expectations were not well managed, need to know the rules of the game. It's critical to know roles and whether to engage in the process. It's helpful to acknowledge what happened was wrong, and to not do it again

CAT Member Comment: Feel better about moving forward if Director could acknowledge the past.

Tom Keller led the CAT through a discussion regarding trust, and the need to amend the rules to establish trust. In addition, expectations and a charter need to be defined. The CAT identified their sore points, but indicated a desire to move forward. The group discussed whether ADOT had a charter for CAT expectations. ADOT does not have a charter and used the previous Draft Operating Policies.

CAT Member Comment: CAT members were told that the CAT was part of the federal process, then later told that the CAT was not required and that ADOT went above and beyond the requirements when forming the CAT.

Bill Vachon, FHWA, explained that the public involvement process is part of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and a CAT is not a requirement of NEPA. He further explained that it is important to remember that this process is a discovery process; that studies continue to be refined, even today. The studies are a continuing effort. FHWA is verifying the studies are correct. The studies aren't finalized until the document is final.

Schedule and Process

The CAT discussed the purpose of the April 2007 meeting – to finalize the operating procedures and establish where the CAT is going.

CAT Member Comment: The operating procedures will probably not change. It's a waste of time to review this document. We should list topics instead.

Tom Keller emphasized the importance of the operating procedures document and how it will define the CAT's recommendation process. Tom further explained that although the document may not change significantly, it is important to review since one-third of the CAT is new. Several new members also voiced their desire to review the operating procedures. Tom also stated that it is important for the group to adopt policies to govern themselves, for example: how will the CAT add new members and what is the CAT's

definition of consensus. The CAT would also like to see ADOT's operating procedures in relation to the CAT.

April 26, 2007 SMCAT Meeting Discussion

Outcomes for April 26, 2007 meeting include:

- Consensus on operating procedures
- Define consensus
- ADOT's operating procedures in relation to the CAT
- Future discussion topics and schedule

CAT Member Comment: ADOT needs to respect the key issues, and hold meetings with purpose. Don't push the Eastern Section recommendation due to political pressure.

CAT Member Comment: How long do we allow new groups to join the CAT? We need to define by the end of the April meeting.

Tom asked that the CAT members forward recommendations on additional groups to him. Tom would then add this item to the agenda. Tom also reminded the members that the CAT meetings are not subject to open-meeting laws as per the Attorney General's office.

CAT Member Comment: The public should be allowed to speak at the CAT meeting.

CAT Member Comment: The CAT meetings are not the appropriate forum for the public. That's what public meetings are for.

Other topics to be discussed at the April meeting include laying the ground rules for appropriate behavior, for both CAT members and the public.

Tom Keller asked the CAT how liability issues were determined. Members responded that the CAT didn't want to get sued. Also, the members explained that the operating procedures were developed by the previous consultant and were generally accepted by the CAT.

In closing, the CAT decided information should be provided on 3-hole punch paper for insertion into a project notebook. New members were also encouraged to review the project Web site at www.southmountainfreeway.com for more additional information.

Public Questions/Comments

1. Schedule all future SMCAT meetings addressing the east leg of the SMF in Ahwatukee or 2nd choice: in southeast Phoenix 32nd Street -48th Street area. ADOT Headquarters is an inconvenient location and an unsafe area of the City for evening meetings after 5:30 p.m.

Response: The CAT will determine the location of future meetings following the second orientation meeting in April 2007.

2. If new members, after original February 2004 meeting, were invited and approved by SMCAT consensus, how were today's new members determined and invited to the 1st meeting since April 2004 without meeting of SMCAT since June 2006 and 55th Avenue intersect decision?

Response: All original and current members were contacted to resume their participation in the CAT. Groups not present at the March 22, 2007 meeting have not expressed an interest in rejoining the group.

3. I want a roster of the March 22, 2007 SMCAT members and the SMCAT 2004 charter statement of purpose and objectives sent to me.

Response: The requested documents were provided to all CAT members.